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Editorial

Use people power to oust the Arroyo regime

The current situation demands greater effort in mustering the people's collective strength to deliver blows on, and end, Arroyo's corrupt and hated rule. In the face of Gloria Arroyo's obstinate hold on power, the people have launched huge and extensive mobilizations to put an immediate end to the present ruling clique.

Conditions are moving towards the eruption of another massive people's uprising to fulfill demands for urgent change. The situation is likewise excellent for rapidly advancing the people's democratic revolution and progressing to the next substage of people's war.

Arroyo's hypocritical admission that it was her voice heard in the Gloriagate tapes talking to a COMELEC official and her tortuous denial that she rigged the results of the last election have thoroughly angered the people. Long before this, the people already despised the Arroyo regime's onerous economic policies that have wrought extreme poverty and loathed the increasingly repressive measures taken against those opposed to them.

In the face of all this, the Arroyo regime is unleashing numerous legal and political maneuvers to obscure the issue and detract from it, to weave even more lies, confuse and de-

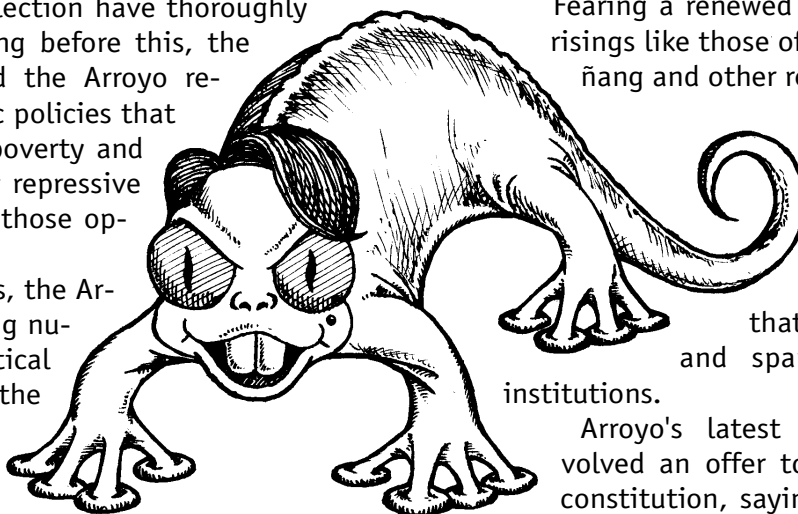
ceive the people, circumvent laws and judicial processes and eventually absolve Arroyo of any wrongdoing. Even as anti-Arroyo forces persevere in parliamentary processes such as public investigations, Arroyo's followers in congress and in other instruments of the reactionary government are deviously pulling all stops to block or outmaneuver them.

The Filipino people know that with Arroyo's deception, maneuvers and obstinacy, they need to take action and use people power to effect her ouster. The various anti-Arroyo forces are in the process of advancing all possible means of revealing the truth about Arroyo's crimes. Mass mobilizations are growing widespread nationwide. There is a confluence of various factors leading to another gigantic people's uprising.

Fearing a renewed outburst of people's uprisings like those of 1986 and 2001, Malacañang and other reactionaries are acting in haste to douse cold water over the burning political crisis besetting the reactionary ruling system and find a way of resolving it that would absolve Arroyo and spare existing reactionary

institutions.

Arroyo's latest political maneuver involved an offer to amend the reactionary constitution, saying that the political sys-



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tem had become "corrupt." Instead of resigning, she has instead ordered cabinet officials who had demanded her resignation to quit their posts. With these twin moves, Arroyo has once again eluded responsibility for her corrupt, anomalous and criminal acts.

Prior to this, Malacañang had dared anti-Arroyo forces to file an impeachment case, a move that is sure to fail with Arroyo's control of the majority in congress. Interestingly, no one save Arroyo's allies and partymates has taken the bait.

Other reactionaries are pushing the option of having the "duly-elected" vice president Noli de Castro succeed Arroyo, despite his complicity in last year's electoral fraud and widespread skepticism over his competence.

The object of such schemes is to stem the rising tide of another large-scale people's uprising. The reactionaries fear that another round of people power may no longer be limited to a mere change of presidents. They are deathly afraid of having the Filipino people play a direct role in effecting changes in reactionary political rule. They depict as a terrifying

thing the growing and widespread demand for immediately changing corrupt, narrow and elitist rule in favor of new forms of political leadership that would allow the broad and direct participation of various democratic forces and sectors of society and the implementation of important urgent reforms and pave the way for advancing the struggle for even more basic reforms.

Malacañang, the AFP and PNP leadership and their rabid reactionary allies are one in warning that the regime's forcible ouster would be a "violation of the constitution," in saying that the means of resolving the crisis must be limited to the inutile processes under their control, in claiming that the people are afflicted with "people power fatigue" and in spreading anti-communist hysteria.


This line strains to obscure the fact that the people's interests, rights, freedom and unified action are far more important and exceedingly more powerful than the limited political institutions and processes that exist. Had the people confined themselves to "constitutionally mandated processes",

the people's uprisings of 1986 and 2001 would not have come to pass. The reactionary politicians' outlook on this issue reeks with sheer hypocrisy: They invoke their constitution's "inviolability" whenever they profit from it but set it aside whenever it stands in the way of their interests or ambitions of power. This reactionary line likewise covers up the fact that it is those who benefit from the present order who are "tired" of people's actions for change. The masses of the people will never tire of waging struggle and rising up for as long as the basic problems that bear heavily on them have not been decisively eliminated.

People's massive and direct action to chart their own course and effect changes will take place over and over alongside the advance of armed struggle. At every turn, such actions will grow ever richer in terms of revolutionary form and content until necessary basic historical and social changes are realized.

The current political crisis is merely an indication of the ever-worsening crisis of the entire ruling system. The present regime has already exacted a heavy toll on the people and must be overthrown immediately. It is extremely important for the Party and the revolutionary movement to arouse the broad masses of the people to muster their powerful strength anew and wield it to oust the present regime and establish a new government that will carry out immediate necessary changes.

The struggle to end the regime forms but part of the continuing effort to advance the new-democratic revolution that will bring the decadent semicolonial and semi-feudal ruling system to an end and establish a truly free, just and de-

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Arroyo's days in the Palace are numbered

The ranks of people demanding Arroyo's resignation have swelled, with several groups that used to be reluctant in issuing a clear stand on the "Gloriagate" scandal now joining calls for the president to step down.

The calls, which have spread like wildfire, were prompted by Arroyo's admission on June 27 that she spoke to a COMELEC official during the 2004 election. The admission has merely fanned the people's burning anger.

A speech on June 29 by Fernando Poe Jr.'s widow Susan Roces denouncing the president's shamelessness reflected and brought to the fore the people's rage.

Arroyo has failed to make fools of the people in denying that she meant to commit fraud in conversing with the COMELEC. This has been confirmed by the latest Social Weather Stations survey which found six out of ten Metro Manila residents believing that Arroyo's exchanges with the COMELEC official showed that she intended to rig the polls. Meanwhile, a Pulse Asia survey has shown that 61% of Filipinos want Arroyo removed from office.

The latest additions to the ranks of anti-Arroyo forces include the Manila Public School Teachers Association (MPSTA), the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT), the

National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), teachers from the UP College of Law, faculty and students from De La Salle University and students of Ateneo de Manila University.

The Committee for the Defense of Lawyers (CODAL) and the Free Legal Assistance Group (FLAG), both large organizations of attorneys, had earlier released similar statements. The Cebu chapter of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) has also rejected Arroyo's appeal for support, and has instead joined other organizations in calling for her resignation.

Four archbishops of the Catholic church have already gone ahead to call on Arroyo to resign and pave the way for the establishment of a transitional government. According to Archbishops Julio Xavier Labayan, Deogracias Iñiguez, Antonio Tobias and Oscar Cruz, Arroyo has lost all moral basis to lead the country. Meanwhile, Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales of Manila has stated that Arroyo should do more than just apologize. The people are closely watching whether Catholic church offi-

cials would mirror the widespread call for Arroyo's ouster.

Even the AFP is wracked by crisis. News is rife about the existence of groups of military officers ready to support Arroyo's ouster. Sen. Rodolfo Biazon stated on July 5 that a group of lower- and middle-ranking AFP officers was ready to go on mass leave to express their stand on the issue.

Every day, forces that obstinately defend Arroyo become more and more isolated from the people.

Corazon Aquino's call on June 29 to avoid extra-constitutional means and instead rely on prayer to weather the present crisis was met with criticism. In a statement, NDFP chief political consultant Jose Maria Sison assailed Aquino's immoral defense of the corrupt Arroyo regime. Ka Joma cited that Aquino herself benefited from setting aside the fascist constitution and relying on a massive people's uprising to overthrow the Marcos dictatorship.

Many people have also been angered by the shameless ma-



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mocratic system.

As long as the present rotten reactionary system is not decisively terminated, the social crisis will become ever worse and will time and again lead to such upheavals.

Every time the Party and the revolutionary movement successfully advance endeavors where the people attain benefits through their own efforts, the peo-

ple grasp through their own experience the correct means of effecting social change and are brought closer to the path of revolution. Both the armed revolution and the people's democratic movement are strengthened along with their capacity to challenge reactionary power and assert the people's interests. The revolutionary movement and the people are also able to accumulate significant and concrete victories that serve as stepping stones for attaining total victory.

AB

neuers of Arroyo's congressional allies to prevent the disclosure of the truth behind the scandal. Administration congressmen have become objects of scorn and ridicule as they turned a blind eye to the truth that has long been evident to the people. Until June 29, they did all they could to delay the playing in open congress of the recorded conversations between Arroyo and COMELEC Commissioner Garcillano. Fearing that the growing anti-Arroyo movement would culminate in an uprising, they were finally compelled to allow the playing of the record.

Cracks have emerged within the ruling clique as a consequence of the growing anti-Arroyo movement. On July 7, Arroyo announced the resignation of her entire cabinet to mitigate the major impact from the planned resignation of a number of her cabinet members.

In yet another indication of the regime's desperation, it has continuously warned that the protests may lead to violence. It is highly probable for the government to unleash violence and blame it on the revolutionary forces to terrorize the people and force the retreat of forces opposed to Arroyo's stay in power.

But no matter what the regime does, it cannot prevent its impending collapse. The Arroyo regime's days are numbered. **AB**

Arroyo's sham apology

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the entire revolutionary movement are one with the Filipino people in repudiating Gloria Arroyo's sham apology and her attempt to evade responsibility for electoral fraud. She is wrong in thinking that anyone could ever believe her claims and prevarications. The CPP believes that the Arroyo regime's successive schemes to muzzle the truth will merely stoke the people's anger and eventually push them to oust her from power.

For the last few weeks, the regime's deceptive and sordid maneuvers have failed to douse cold water on the spreading fire of the people's condemnation. The schemes have included attempts to ban the playing of the taped conversations between Gloria Arroyo and Virgilio Garcillano, and disruptions to derail public hearings on this issue in congress. The regime shamelessly suppresses mass actions and other legitimate forms of protest such as putting up posters and possessing the popular "Hello, Garci?" ringtone. It quickly hid Garcillano, threatened everyone scheduled to testify in the hearing, and poured in millions to bribe supporters and pay for the efforts of a lawyer who has filed a bogus impeachment case in congress.

Arroyo's cheap gimmicks fool no one. They and the Gloria-Garcillano conversations merely confirm what the people have long known, namely, that the entire reactionary government, the cliques and individuals that run it, and the alleged democratic processes that guide it, are all rotten to the core. **AB**

A gathering storm

Thousands gathered in Liwasang Bonifacio on July 7 to demand Gloria Arroyo's ouster. It was but the latest in a series of ever bigger and more frequent people's mobilizations against the Arroyo regime.

Before this, 20,000 people trooped to Makati City on July 1 to rouse businessmen from their lackluster response to the call for Arroyo's resignation. Eight thousand members of Bangon Pilipinas launched a meeting that same day to declare their stand.

On June 30, some 4,500 members of progressive organizations gathered in Plaza Miranda while 1,500 workers marched in Makati. Other forms of protest such as prayer-rallies were also held that day.

The first of many huge rallies took place on June 24 when 15,000 marched from Sto. Domingo Church towards Liwasang Bonifacio. They were

forced to hold their program at the Welcome Rotunda where they were blocked by 1,000 policemen.

The people launched various protests in between these big rallies. On July 5, progressive writers initiated a petition over the internet for Arroyo's resignation. Progressive organizations busied themselves every day explaining the issues, gathering signatures and enticing more and more people to attend the planned mobilizations. They made the rounds of marketplaces, schools and other population centers.

In communities, activists openly played the 31-minute tape of Arroyo and Garcillano's conversations. CDs of the conversations sold briskly for P20 each in many parts of the country.

On the internet and in text messages, the youth expressed their protest through ringtones that kept multiplying with each passing day. Jokes disparaging Arroyo and her relatives have also been spreading. **AB**



Nine battles in 12 days

The indomitable spirit of the NPA in Ilocos-Cordillera

In 12 days, heroic Red fighters of the Agustin Begnalen Command (ABC-NPA) succeeded in frustrating successive attacks by the AFP on NPA forces along the tri-boundary of Abra, Ilocos Sur and Mt. Province.

The AFP launched a large-scale operation in the area after the Red fighters' successful raid in Barangay Tiempo, Tubo, Abra on June 4 that resulted in the seizure of 30 firearms.

Following are the basic facts from a report of the ABC-NPA replete with the Red fighters' heroism and daringness:

June 9. Large-scale operations began with the entry of combined forces of the 41st and 50th IB along the Abra-Ilocos Sur border. An estimated 500 troops from two battalions were deployed for the operation. Another company from the 54th IB was positioned in Agawa, Besao, Mt. Province to serve as a blocking force in case the Red fighters retreated to that area. Reinforcements from the 21st IB were also stationed in Kalinga. The PNP 52nd and 53rd Recon Coy were likewise deployed in the area.

An enemy company then chanced upon an NPA camp. They were about to enter it when NPA forces inside the camp noticed their presence. One of the guerrillas fired on the first three enemy troops seen along the river at the edge of the camp. The NPA forces quickly left the camp amid the fighting. The enemy stopped its attempt to enter the camp and retreated first to a nearby hill. When

other NPA forces positioned near the camp learned about this, they immediately sent a team of five Red fighters to assist their comrades and strike at the enemy. The team engaged the enemy forces on the hill that the latter had retreated to.

June 10. Other NPA forces who were also in the area formed three teams of five persons each that spread out over the various mountainous and forested portions of the camp to await any enemy troops that would try to return. At around 2 pm of June 10, the enemy entered the vacated camp. An NPA team engaged a group of enemy soldiers near the camp.

June 11. NPA forces deployed a team near the camp to monitor the enemy's movements, another team to wait in ambush along the enemy's likely exit points or the new reinforcements' likely entry points, and another to monitor other routes that could possibly be taken by the enemy. At around seven in the morning, enemy reinforcements entered the designated ambush site. The NPA team retreated amid heavy enemy fire. After an hour, it returned to continue striking at the reinforcements.

Meanwhile, an NPA team that had positioned itself some 10 meters from the camp to close in on the enemy was drawn into battle.

Amid the fighting, at around 11 in the morning, two helicopters arrived and tried to land near the camp. When the helicopters were only five meters away from them, the Red fighters opened fire,

instantly hitting the machine gunner onboard. The helicopters retreated, with one of them wobbling badly. It was reported to have crashed in nearby Sitio Matibwey, with the wounded machine gunner, a colonel and a lieutenant aboard.

At around 3 in the afternoon, an OV-10 Bronco plane arrived, opened fire and bombed the area for an hour. Eight bombs were dropped, but only five of them detonated.

The AFP was put to big shame because that same day, Red fighters of the Alfredo Cesar Command successfully ambushed the 50th IB in Barangay Malaya, Cervantes, Ilocos Sur. Nine AFP soldiers were killed and three wounded, including a lieutenant who served as their commanding officer. The NPA seized seven high-powered firearms.

June 12. The Bronco dropped six more big bombs and fired seven rockets. Next arrived a helicopter that tried to drop supplies and retrieve enemy casualties. But it was once again unable to land as the NPA team that had closed in on the camp fired on it.

June 13. NPA snipers positioned themselves once again on two hills. At around 11 in the morning, a Bronco arrived together with a helicopter. It dropped eight more bombs. The helicopter was able to land, retrieve the casualties and drop supplies for the enemy.

June 14. By dusk, a team of snipers engaged the enemy on a hill. A Red fighter was killed in the firefight. The soldiers tried to use his body as bait but failed to get their hands on it. At around 7:30 in the evening, the Bronco airplane arrived again, dropping 15 bombs and raining rockets in the area.

June 18. Because of the urgent need for supplies, an NPA team tried to get to a stock of goods



located along one corner of the enemy-held camp at around 10 in the morning. A battle broke out nearby and once again, an enemy helicopter came to the rescue. It fired several rounds of 81 mm mortars. The NPA team retreated.

June 19. A platoon-size NPA force was organized to procure supplies from the enemy-occupied camp. The guerrillas spotted enemy soldiers along the way and were drawn into a firefight anew. The fighting lasted from 10 o'clock in the morning to two o'clock in the afternoon. A Red fighter sustained minor injuries. The enemy was forced to retreat due to the sheer number of its casualties. The NPA continued to procure supplies.

June 20. The Red fighters learned that the enemy was already on the retreat from its area of operation. The platoon that was tasked to procure supplies positioned itself again along the path that the enemy was to take to wait in ambush for retreating troops and those that would be retrieving casualties. All they saw was the tail end of the enemy column. They decided not to strike.

The ABC-NPA estimates having killed at least 15 enemy troops in nine battles that took place along three high mountains and five villages along the border. In a span of 12 days, a few score Red fighters steadfastly fought off and frustrated over 500 enemy forces that enjoyed air support from fighter and bomber planes.

Except for a comrade who offered his life, all that the enemy forces got was an M14, a buckshot, two pistols, and kitchen utensils and office equipment from the camp they had penetrated.

Despite eyes sunken from fatigue and lack of sleep due to the successive battles, morale remained high all throughout among the Red fighters. They superbly maintained their valor and their fighting spirit, and were daring and creative in their use of tactics and techniques. Overall, the NPA command did excellently in carrying out its tasks and coordinating the small and scattered units positioned along the steep mountains and difficult terrain in the scene of battle. Once again, the Red fighters demonstrated that the people's army is invincible against the corrupt reactionary army. **AB**

NPA seizes 70 firearms in June

At least 70 weapons were added to the New People's Army's (NPA) arsenal in June from tactical offensives launched against troops of the US-Arroyo regime in various parts of the country. The latest additions are the result of successful operations in Bukidnon, North Cotabato and Western Samar. Below are some of the details of these tactical offensives.

Prior to this, *Ang Bayan* had tallied 37 firearms of various caliber seized by NPA units in June in the Ilocos-Cordillera region alone. Thirty (30) firearms were seized in an assault on a Philippine Army detachment in Tiempo, Tubo, Abra (June 3); and seven (7) in an ambush in Bessang Pass, Cervantes, Ilocos Sur (June 13).

These victories clearly put the lie to recent claims by the regime's propagandists that the NPA is on the wane and its ranks are dwindling.



NPA confiscates 24 firearms in North Cotabato raid

Combined forces of the Magtanggol Roque Command, Herminio Alfonso Command and the Ka Paking Guimbaolibot Red Partisan Brigade of the New People's Army seized 24 firearms of various caliber in a raid on the Philippine National Police (PNP) station in Magpet, North Cotabato at around six o'clock in the evening of June 26.

The Red fighters were able to freely enter the police station by employing a ruse. They masqueraded as policemen bringing in a prisoner. To the real policemen's surprise, more Red fighters alighted from a vehicle. The police were unable to put up any resistance.

In a statement, Rigoberto Sanchez, spokesperson of the Merardo Arce Command (MAC) of the NPA-Southern Mindanao Region said that the raid is proof of continued improvements in the NPA's intelligence and operations capabilities. The key to the raid's success, he said, was the people's support which came in the form of providing important information and assistance.

The raid was also a powerful blow on Gov. Emmanuel Piñol and his brother, Magpet mayor Efren Piñol. Said the MAC, the Piñol-AFP conspiracy deserved to be punished for oppressing the people in the province through the forcible expansion of gigantic agribusiness corporations, the forma-

tion of paramilitary groups, and the intensification of their operations to perpetuate their antipeople rule.

NPA disarms Scout Rangers in Bukidnon

Two Scout Ranger troops who served as guards in a poultry farm in Dalwangan, Malaybalay, Bukidnon were completely taken by surprise and were unable to resist when an undersized platoon of the NPA Rexan Perez Command attacked them on June 30. The poultry farm was owned by a big businessman.

In a report, Ka Cesar Renerio, official spokesperson of the NPA in North Central Mindanao said the raid yielded three M16s, three M203 grenade launchers, a KV submachinegun, a pair of night vision goggles, a portable global positioning system (GPS) receiver and a base radio. The NPA immediately released the two mercenary military men because they owed no blood debts to the people.

The Red fighters had long retreated before forces of the 4th ID arrived with two MG-520 helicopter gunships from Cagayan de Oro.

NPA seizes 2 rifles in Samar ambush

The New People's Army (NPA) seized an M16 and an M14 in an ambush on elements of the 81st Recon Coy who were aboard a vehicle in Barangay Balante, Basey, Samar on June 28. Five soldiers were killed in the ambush. Unfortunately, a soldier's wife who had hitched a ride was also killed. The guerrillas safely retreated and it was too late when two Huey helicopters arrived to pursue the Red fighters.

Militarization in Andap Valley, Surigao del Sur

The truth behind Oplan Nazareth

From the end of April to the middle of May, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) launched Oplan Nazareth, a massive counterrevolutionary military campaign in Andap Valley, Surigao del Sur. At least four Philippine Army battalions and one Scout Ranger company scoured the mountainous areas of the towns of Lianga, San Agustin, Marihatag, Cagwait, Tago and San Miguel.

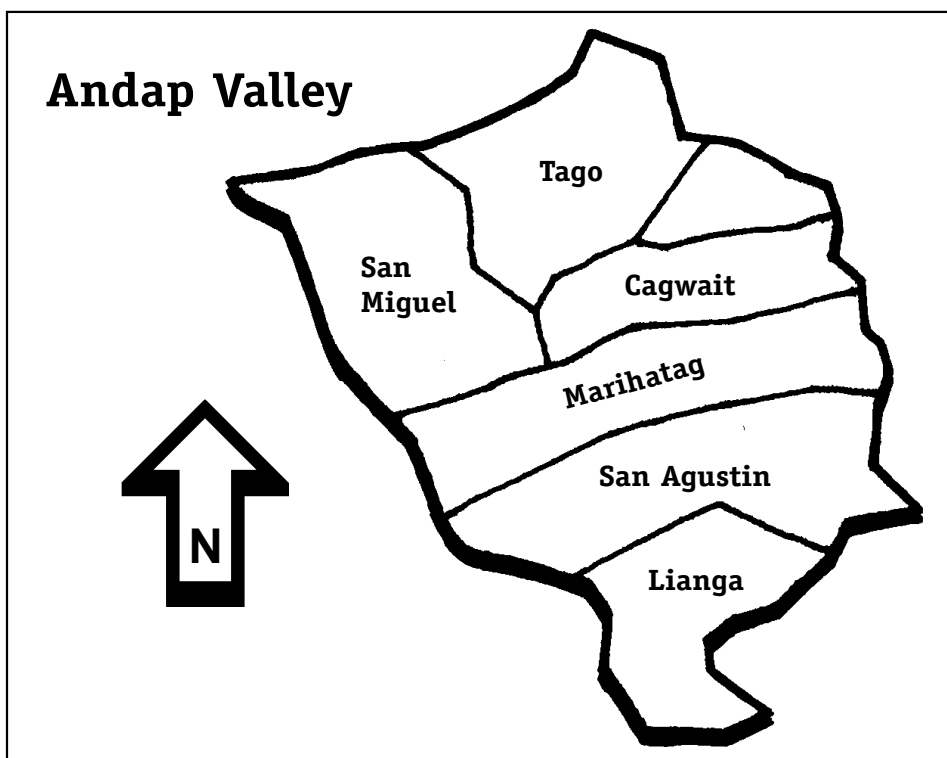
Oplan Nazareth was aimed at quelling the people's revolutionary resistance and defeat the New People's Army (NPA) in the area and pave the way for big comprador and foreign capitalist mining and logging operations.

In preparation for the large-scale military campaign, the 58th IB launched a "probing operation" in the latter part of 2004 ostensibly to gauge NPA strength in the

area. The AFP forces sustained casualties in a sniping operation by Red fighters of the NPA-Pulang Diwata Command (NPA-PDC) on December 16 near the Sabang River in Marihatag.

This was followed by an even bigger operation on March 27 where the AFP unleashed four columns of the 58th IB into the area. An NPA-PDC team ambushed one of the columns in Km. 23, Marihatag on April 3, killing a soldier and wounding six others. The guerrillas seized an M16 rifle, a pair of night vision goggles and a rifle scope from the enemy.

Under the leadership of the 4th ID, the military operations were further expanded from April 28 to May 15. Two Special Forces battalions conducted operations, aside from the 36th and 58th IB, the 42nd Deep Reconnaissance Coy



and the Scout Ranger Coy Class 158-04. The enemy also used OV-10 Bronco bomber planes, MG-520 helicopter gunships and 105 mm and 155 mm artillery guns.

From May 2 to May 12, the NPA undertook four harassment operations against the AFP troops. In each instance, the enemy sustained more casualties on top of the losses it suffered from the NPA's sniping as the confused soldiers ended up shooting one another. On May 2, five more troopers were killed in Sabang River aside from the two enemy forces slain by NPA snipers after the soldiers shot

at each other, again due to their confusion. The AFP sustained its biggest casualties on May 5 in Bell-John Spar, San Agustin where at least 47 soldiers were killed. Aside from a lieutenant and a radioman who died instantly from the NPA's sniping operation, 45 more troops were killed and an undetermined number wounded in the ensuing misencounter.

The soldiers were so angry that they vent their ire on defenseless civilians. After losing seven troops on May 2 in Sabang River, the enemy forces fired their guns indiscriminately at the civilians' homes

and burned down five houses at the scene of the fighting.

The AFP also bombed Andap Valley for six days after suffering big numbers of casualties on May 5 in Bell-John Spar.

Meantime, on May 12, soldiers arbitrarily shot a civilian named Jessie Bacasmas in Km. 9 while he was about to board a truck carrying evacuees to Diatagon. Prior to this, the NPA sniped at three groups of enemy troops at Winford Line, San Miguel, killing two soldiers. As usual, the enemy troops ended up shooting at each other, suffering an undetermined number of casual-

Why is the enemy so keen on Andap Valley?

Andap Valley, which is rich in natural resources is one of the vast areas of the country opened by the US-Arroyo regime to big foreign and comprador mining and logging operations. The massive military operations being launched by the AFP in the area aim to pave the way for, and protect, mining and logging companies in Andap Valley.

Huge mining companies have had a big stake in the valley for over 20 years now. In 1980, Benguet Corp. acquired a 6,000-hectare coal mining concession covering the towns of Lianga, San Agustin, Marihatag and San Miguel. However, Benguet Corp. suspended the project in 1984 due to opposition from the revolutionary movement in the area.

After the Supreme Court upheld the Mining Act of 1995 in January this year, Benguet Corp. revived plans to mine coal in the province. The Philippine National Oil Co. is likewise conducting coal exploration activities in Surigao del Sur. Hinatuan Mining Corporation also has an approved Mineral Production Sharing Agreement to mine nickel in 2,426.51 hectares of Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur.

There are at present five active Timber Licensing Agreements (TLAs) in the Caraga region covering 236,288 hectares. The three largest companies that hold TLAs in Caraga—Sudecor owned by the Puyat family, Artimco owned by the San Victor family and the Picop Resources, Inc. owned by the Bernardino family—are all in Surigao del Sur.

The windfall revenues the Arroyo regime expects from mining and logging ventures make it turn a

blind eye to the plunder of the country's natural resources by imperialists and compradors and the certain destruction to the environment and the lives and livelihood of people living in the area. It is places like Andap Valley whose natural resources are being plundered that are now bearing the onslaught of vicious military operations.

To the AFP, the biggest obstacle to the continuation of extensive mining and logging operations in Andap Valley is what it believes to be a strong NPA presence and a broad revolutionary mass base in the area. Indications of this, said the AFP, are the celebration of the Party's 35th anniversary in December 2003 that was attended by thousands of people, the large gathering of over 50 media representatives, officials of the National Democratic Front-Mindanao and a number of well-known politicians in January 2004 that was joined by over 2,000 people; and the NDF anniversary celebration in April 2004 that was likewise attended by thousands of people.

Surigao del Sur has also been the site of major defeats by the AFP in the hands of the NPA amid Oplan Lambit Bitag II's rampage. Up to 52 soldiers were killed in an NPA ambush in Aras-asan, Cagwait in February 1992, and the enemy suffered as many as 60 casualties in a tactical offensive in Lindoy, Tago in the latter part of the 1980s. Thousands of people were forced to evacuate from upland villages due to massive bombings and other human rights violations in the area. AB

ties.

All in all, seven farmers were arbitrarily arrested, six houses were burned, four civilians were abducted and remain missing to date and more than 3,000 residents from six municipalities were forced to evacuate. More than a hundred families also sustained damage to their homes, crops and other property due to enemy bombing and strafing. Many other civilians were tortured, forced to serve as guides and harassed.

All the enemy gained was the discovery on May 11 of a cave where the NPA-PDC kept explosives, ordnance equipment and some firearms for repair. Despite the massiveness and scope of the military operation, not a single NPA guerrilla was killed. Instead, it was the AFP that suffered big casualties.

Oplan Nazareth failed, mainly because of the breadth and strength of the people's support for the revolutionary movement. Any enemy operation whose only objective is to run roughshod on the people's interests can never succeed.

Such enemy operations also tend to fail, precisely because of the AFP's decadence and marked internal weaknesses, among them the intense corruption that leads to poor intelligence work, poor communications equipment and meager supplies that all breed low morale.

The NPA and the revolutionary forces in Surigao del Sur expect another, more terrible phase of Oplan Nazareth. But with the long history of courage and determination shown by the Red fighters, the revolutionary forces and the mass base in the area, they are sure to defeat the AFP anew when its rotten forces stage another attack. **AB**

Revolutionary youth-student movement in Mindanao holds conference

The revolutionary youth and student movement (RYSM) in Mindanao successfully conducted a conference somewhere in the central part of the island from May 10-17 attended by 22 representatives of the RYSM from Mindanao's five regions, by staff from the CPP Mindanao Commission and by members of the Party's National Youth and Student Bureau.

The conference discussed the victories and important issues faced by the Party in carrying forward the RYSM in Mindanao and adopted measures to advance it more vigorously.

The assessment noted that the RYSM is now positioned in 125 major and strategic schools in the island. Revolutionary mass organizations of youth and students have been established in these schools with membership running to several thousands and a mass base reaching several tens of thousands. A relatively big number of these schools are well consolidated; the RYSM has been able to sustain its presence and operations and lead important school organizations.

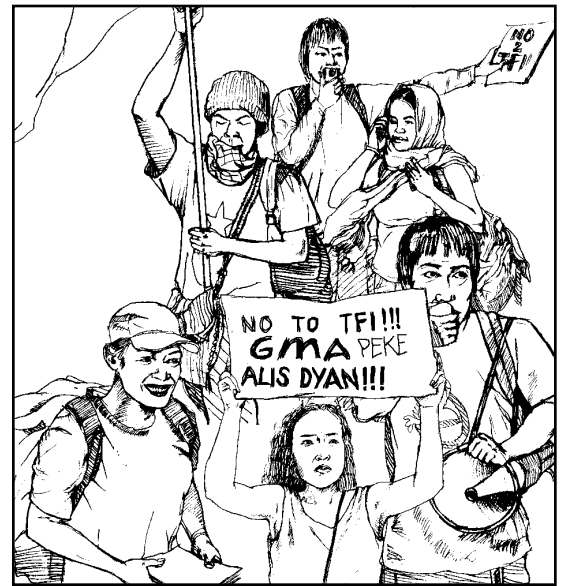
The RYSM not only covers colleges and universities in Mindanao but a number of big high schools and urban poor communities.

Although the number of led organizations remains small compared to the overall student population, the revolutionary forces have been able to effectively lead successful struggles of youth and students on major school issues that have benefited thousands of students. For instance, mass actions against tuition fee hikes in a number of schools have succeeded in reducing the rate of increase from 15-20% to 6-10%. The mass actions were also able to put a stop to the collection of a number of miscellaneous fees and other charges, and in some instances, the monies collected from the students were returned. Some unjust policies were also thwarted. The victories not only benefited students but teachers and other school employees as well.

Students' rights to establish and run their own councils and publications were also safeguarded. Many mass activists won in student council elections, and in many instances, even won by landslide.

The RYSM's forces in the island have been able to operate both openly and clandestinely even in schools that suppress students' rights. They have been able to creatively and militantly assert the students' academic and democratic rights.

The RYSM in Mindanao remains at the forefront of the struggle to



advance students' rights and welfare and the interests of the youth in urban poor communities.

RYSM elements and the influenced masses of the youth are also among the leading forces advancing multisectoral and national issues. Hundreds, and in some instances, thousands have been mobilized in these struggles. Thousands of youth were organized and mobilized in the last electoral struggle, all of them with firm links to the struggles of the masses of workers, semi-proletariat, peasants and other oppressed and exploited sectors.

RYSM forces have also been assiduous in conducting propaganda and education work, militantly propagating the national-democratic line in schools and in the streets during demonstrations, rallies, pickets and other mass actions.

Many youth activists from the cities have joined the NPA and the peasant movement in the countryside. The revolutionary movement in Mindanao is now self-reliant in sending cadres and youth activists to the countryside. They are an immense help in performing the various revolutionary tasks of the NPA and the guerrilla fronts. In the last three years, over 60 youth from the cities have joined the NPA. This is aside from the 160 who went on tours of duty for a few months to help in revolutionary work in the countryside and deepen their understanding of the people's democratic revolution.

The conference decided to redouble its efforts in expanding and strengthening the Kabataang Makabayan (the national-democratic underground mass organization for youth and students) and the Party organization in all big and major schools; expand legal progressive and traditional school organizations; invigorate local and sectoral struggles under steady guidance by the national-democratic line; invigorate sustained political education among Party-led and -influenced mass organizations; strengthen the continued linkages between the struggles of the RYSM and the struggles of the basic masses; and raise the number of youth joining the NPA. The conference likewise resolved to encompass many more big high schools and a greater number of the youth in urban poor communities. **AB**

The blood-stained hands of Palparan

The marked increase and intensification of human rights violations in Eastern Visayas (EV) since Brig. Gen. Jovito Palparan's deployment as 8th ID chief have spurred the region's twelve congressmen to push for an investigation. Confronting each other in Congress on May 31 were victims and their family members, a number of congressmen and known henchmen and fascists in EV such as Brig. Gen. Jovito Palparan, PNP Chief Supt. Dionisio Coloma, Col. Manuelito Usi and Col. Bernard de Luna.



At the congressional hearing, Katungod-Sinirangang Bisayas (Katungod-SB) secretary-general Alex Lagunzad said that there were 199 recorded cases of human rights violations in EV in the 86 days since Palparan assumed command of the 8th ID on February 10. During this period, there were 22 cases of summary execution (equivalent to five per month) and 20 cases of abduction. There were also 36 victims of strafing, bombing and indiscriminate firing, 13 victims of torture, 16 victims of beatings and arbitrary arrest and 17 victims of arbitrary detention. In the same period, there were as many as 979 victims of forced evacuation from 21 communities in the towns of Calbiga, Tarangan, Motiong, Jiabong, Catbalogan and Paranas, all in Samar province.

The total number of cases of human rights violations recorded in barely three months of Palparan's tenure far exceeds the 94 cases recorded for the whole of 2004.

Testimonies. Amelia Dacut testified on the death in the hands of the military of her husband, Katungod-SB lawyer Atty. Felidito Dacut. Chief Supt. Coloma was quick to deny that it was the military that shot and killed Attorney Dacut.

Meanwhile, Eastern Visayas Bayan Muna provincial coordinator Alden Ambida; Alyansa sa mga Mag-uuma alang sa Reporma sa Yuta (ALMARYU) chairperson Dario Tomada; Katungod-Leyte chair Filomeno Salazar, Jr.; and Alex Lagunzad gave their testimonies. These leaders of various legal organizations had all suffered attempts on their lives on Palparan's orders.

Ambida was shot on April 9 in Borongan, Eastern Samar. He sustained four gunshot wounds.

Meanwhile, armed men in motorcycles went to Tomada's house in Leyte. Seeing Tomada's brother-in-law outside, the armed men mistook him for the target and shot him.

Armed men also visited Salazar at his house on May 4. The operatives were blocked from entering his house and fled



from the scene when police responded to Salazar's call for help.

Lagunzad was trailed by armed operatives. The men were about to shoot him but eventually backed out because he was surrounded by many people.

Lagunzad said even Katungod-SB's post office box is monitored by the military "daily and by the hour" to surveil members of the organization picking up the mail. He added that a few days before Attorney Dacut was murdered, police apprehended three soldiers hanging around outside their office.

Samar provincial board member and Bayan Muna-EV deputy secretary general Concepcion de Luna reported on the military's campaign to demonize her before the public. She said the military would call for barangay meetings where they would brand de Luna a deceiver and tell the people she could not be trusted because she was allegedly an NPA supporter. De Luna said such campaigns of singling out targets during village meetings called by the military preceded the murder of Karapatan-Southern Tagalog secretary-general Eden Marcellana and Vice Mayor Juvy Magsino of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro. This manner of targeting became the military's norm when Palparan was still deployed in the island. Said de Luna, "ordinary people don't stand a chance if even local government officials can be threatened by the military."

Jovito Velasco's wife and Patricio Abalos' daughter bravely faced the fascists during the hearing and delivered their testimonies. Both Velasco and Abalos are victims of abduction and forced disappearance. (See related article)

Denials, lies. Palparan and his fellow fascists shamelessly issued denials and lied in response to the

The ultimate brutality

Jovito Velasco's wife Elena testified that the military entered their home in Sinantan, Calbayog City in the early morning of April 22 and took her husband. The soldiers forced Velasco to lie face down, stepped on his head and kicked him. He was accused of being an NPA member.

The military ordered Elena to look for some rope to tie up her husband but she refused. When the soldiers found some, they tied up her husband, dragged him outside, kicked him once more and whipped him with a piece of rope. The military ransacked their home in search of a gun Velasco was supposed to have. They also trampled on the clean clothes. They later fired their guns outside the house. They said that it was Velasco's comrades in the NPA who fired their guns and they were therefore going to kill Velasco. They were unable to because Velasco's wife through her arms around him. They put Velasco aboard a multicab. Elena saw them take her husband to the military detachment in Barangay Hamorawon. But the military continues to deny ever having taken Velasco.

Cristina, meanwhile, firmly related how her 62-year-old father Patricio Abalos was taken from his house on Km. 2, Catbalogan, Samar on the night of March 28. The family had noticed a Toyota Revo parked in front of their house and some men alighting from it. Cristina's sickly father went outside, thinking he knew the visitors. The men poked a gun at the old man, and dragged him inside the vehicle that sped off towards the town, with a motorcycle following from behind.

The soldiers returned on March 31 led by someone who introduced himself as 2Lt. Wilbert Basquiñas. Cristina's mother tried to prevent the military from entering their home, but the soldiers threatened to kill both mother and daughter if they did not let them in. They poked a gun on the mother. The soldiers ransacked the entire house and told them to bring out Mang Patricio's gun if they still wanted to see him alive. Basquiñas left them his cellphone number.

Mother and daughter went to Congressman Catalino Figueroa's house to seek his help. The congressman called the number that Basquiñas left them, but the latter merely laughed when Figueroa tried talking to him. Figueroa later summoned Palparan to a municipal mayors' meeting being held in his house. Cristina and her mother came and confronted the murderer. But he merely told them, "Ma'am, just admit that your husband is NPA, so I can help you."

At the Congressional hearing, Palparan denied ever having made the statement. Congressman Figueroa, however, confirmed that that was what Palparan told Cristina and her mother. The butcher Palparan continues to deny abducting the old man. AB

testimonies and accusations. Palparan even had the gall to say that there was no proof that he or his men were personally involved in any of the crimes mentioned de-

spite the fact that as soon as he was assigned commander of the 8th ID, he stated in a radio interview in

Continued on "...Palparan," page 12

Donato Continente freed

DONATO Continente, one of two men convicted by the reactionary court for the 1989 killing of JUSMAG official Col. James Rowe was released on June 28. The Joint US Military Group or JUSMAG is a US military agency intervening in Philippine affairs.

In a statement, the CPP said that while it welcomes Continente's release, his long incarceration underscores the widespread oppression and violation of human rights under the reactionary justice system. It also brings to the fore US imperialist meddling even in the dispensation of justice in the Philippines.

Continente should have been freed a long time ago had it not been for the US' constant interference in his case. He was imprisoned for 16 years.

His fellow convict, Juanito Itaas, remains in jail.

Supreme Court stops EVAT implementation

THE Supreme Court issued a temporary restraining order on the implementation of RA 9337 or the expanded value-added tax (EVAT) law on July 1, only 18 hours after it took effect. This was the court's response to petitions filed by members of congress, suppliers of oil products, transportation groups and progressive parties. The petitioners emphasized that granting Gloria Arroyo standby authority to raise VAT from 10% to 12% next year and the senate's insertion of certain provisions in the law, which only congress has the right to do, are violations of the constitution.

As a result, concerned government agencies were forced to order a rollback in the prices of petroleum products and other services. However, those who were already charged the additional EVAT will no longer be reimbursed, with the government keeping the revenues it had already collected.

Arroyo regime obstructs peace talks—NDFP

THE Arroyo regime once again thwarted the resumption of peace negotiations between the GRP and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) when it unilaterally amended the joint statement crafted by the two peace panels of the NDFP and a number of congressmen on June 27.

After long discussions, the regime unilaterally erased from the joint statement any mention of the issues that the NDFP wanted to resolve in order to facilitate the negotiations. These issues included the removal of the CPP, NPA and Jose Maria Sison from the so-called "terrorist" listing; demands for the NDFP's surrender; and threats on the lives of the NDFP panel consultants.

This latest maneuver came amid exposés of the regime's grave crimes and growing calls for Arroyo's ouster. The NDFP thus stated that the Filipino people must first oust Arroyo and her ultra-Right cabal the soonest time possible to pave the way for the formal resumption of peace negotiations.

Afghani guerrillas bring down US helicopter

The Bush government suffered still another headache when Afghani guerrillas brought down a MH-47 Chinook helicopter in Shurak, Assabad in the eastern province of Kunar, Afghanistan on June 28. Sixteen of the 20 US Navy SEALs (Sea, Air and Land Special Forces) aboard the helicopter were killed.

One of the survivors was rescued while the three others were captured. US forces bombed the surrounding mountains in retaliation, killing seventeen civilians, including many children.

This was the ninth US helicopter shot down by Afghani guerrillas and represented one of the biggest blows on American forces since the US occupied Afghanistan in 2001.

The US Army high command also considered the incident one of the biggest blows to hit US troops in a day.

"...Palparan," from page 11

Tacloban City his brutal plan of abducting select people and crushing legal organizations. (See AB's May 21, 2005 issue)

At the congressional hearing, Palparan also brazenly denied ever having plans to stop legal organiza-

tions from demonstrating against the government even if his statements had been broadcast throughout Eastern Visayas. It was the NPA that he intended to crush, not the legal organizations or ordinary folk, he claimed.

The growing list of human rights violations perpetrated

against officers and members of legal organizations as well as on the ordinary people of Eastern Visayas belie Palparan's protestations. Palparan's lies are futile. Whether the killers he dispatches wear masks or not, the people of Eastern Visayas know very well that they are Palparan's men.

AB